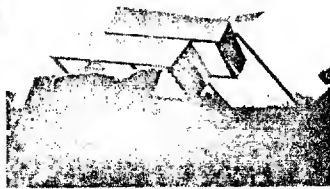


4



5

for Best Engineering in High-Rise Commercial, Industrial, or Institutional Construction. Cited for excellence were R.S. Fling, J.E. Sadler, and P. Mannik, of Fling & Eeman, Inc., Columbus, Ohio, for

their steel dome roof of the Convocation Center, Ohio University. In the new category of Art in Steel, best work was adjudged to be the sculpture "Fallen Sky" (5) by Beverly Pepper of New York. The three works cited for excellence in that category were: the sculpture "Tropic" at the U.S. Pavilion at HemisFair 68, San Antonio, Tex., by Alexander Liberman; the sculpture "Steel Mace" by Charles O. Perry; the sculpture "Diamond" by Antoni H. Milkowski, and a Welded Painted Steel Sculpture by Forrest Myers.

CALENDAR

A series of symposia for planners and architects of performing arts centers, titled "Theatres, Auditoriums, and Concert Halls: The Effective Collaboration," will be held in four cities this spring. Sponsored by the New York firm of Bolt, Beranek & Newman, Inc., acoustical, lighting, and theater consultants, they will be held at the following times and places: March 14-15, Sheraton-Palace Hotel, San Francisco, Calif.; April 11-12, Inn On the Park, Toronto, Ontario, Canada; April 25-26, Sheraton-Ritz Hotel, Minneapolis, Minn., and May 2-3, Holiday Inn Downtown, Atlanta, Ga. . . . For details, write to Bolt, Beranek & Newman, Inc., 101 Park Ave., Suite 325, New York, N.Y. 10017 . . . The 1969 National Conference of the U.S. Institute for Theater

Angeles, Calif. Special discount travel arrangements are being made for participants from the New York area, since this is the first national conference the organization has held west of Chicago. Write for information about registration to: Tom Lehman, USITT Conference Registrar, c/o Beckman Auditorium, Caltech, 1201 E. California Blvd., Pasadena, Calif.

WASHINGTON / FINANCIAL NEWS

by E. E. HALMOS, JR.

What the Budget Holds for Architecture — Because of the foregone conclusion that it would be changed as much and as soon as possible by the Nixon Administration, the

corps.

President Nixon will of course do what he can to pare down the \$195,300,000,000 spending program Johnson outlined, both to make good on some campaign oratory, and, more important, to make some room for his own programs.

Nevertheless, the final Johnson document may prove a good general guidepost, since many of the programs it was planned to fund are dictated by law, and are not subject to much Presidential discretion. Where any real cutting may come must center on direct construction work; or on social programs either not yet under way or just started, which might thus be cut without too much damage or waste.

Nixon has indicated his opposition to any "start-and-stop" handling of construction, so it isn't likely that he will try "holdbacks" such as were made in the highway program within the past year. Instead, he will probably use a direct stop order. Washington had a horrible example of the effect of curtailments and put-offs: The Bureau of Public Roads quarterly cost index jumped more than 11 points, to reach an all-time high in the last quarter of 1968. Statisticians blamed the jump on curtailment of contract lettings.

Therefore, in areas of direct interest to architects, there's not much likelihood of any substantial cut in the \$604 million appropriation sought for military housing construction, or — at least so long as hostilities continue — in the \$530 million requested for direct military construction.

Model Cities Cut Not Likely — By the same token, the \$540 million requested for the Model Cities program is likely to stand.

But the \$982,900,000 sought for academic loans and grants (for construction purposes) might be chopped down; so might the \$43 million asked for highway beautification.

Behind the Real Budget — Where the real cutting can be done is in another aspect of

request, under which Congress is asked to permit the Federal agencies to "obligate" the Government for additional amounts, even if actual appropriations are not available.

Added up, the "NOA" requests amount to \$210 billion, not the \$195,300,000,000 figure reported by most general publications.

The difference is some times enormous: Where \$530 million is asked for expenditures for military construction, the NOA request is for \$1 billion; where the budget seeks \$36 million for expenditure on neighborhood facilities grants (under Housing and Urban Development), NOA would amount to \$52,500,000. A total of \$1 billion of Urban Renewal "NOA" is requested; \$473,500,000 "NOA" for low-cost public housing; \$750 million for Model Cities; \$65 million for comprehensive planning grants, against \$45 million in requested appropriations.

Chopping of these requests for future spending authority would put a tight rein on the Federal departments, and could provide the needed breathing room for any future Nixon programs.

Of course, there's another aspect to Federal spending: What Congress will do with any proposals that the President may make; and what it will do on its own.

As to Presidential requests, Congress seems willing enough to give Nixon his honeymoon — to wait for his suggestions and generally consider them favorably. However, there's also the prospect that it may add substantially to such requests. (Congress can talk a lot about fiscal responsibility, but doesn't have the actual responsibility for balancing the budget.)

Current Money Bills — There were relatively few major spending matters among the 6000 or more bills that had gone into the Congressional hoppers by mid-February.

Biggest was a proposal (S. 269) for a \$400-million-a-year loan-guarantee program to start an attack on a reported backlog of more than \$10 billion in needed construction and reconstruction of U.S. hospitals. Other bills that would involve added

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spending were, for the moment at least, in other areas, such as stream pollution.

The most hopeful bill to go in, from the viewpoint of those pushing for more local public works, is S.409, which would set up a \$25 billion Urban Development Bank, with 50% of funds to be subscribed by the Federal Government, the rest by states and municipalities; the bank would buy up tax-free bonds of local governments at low interest rates, sell them to private investors.

Meanwhile . . . — On other legislative fronts, possibly the most worrisome bill was a House measure (HR 3808) that represents another attempt to set up Federal safety standards for all industry, with particular emphasis on construction. Previous attempts have consistently failed.

In the legislative field, another battle for the construction industry was begun, one that it apparently will win.

The battle has been joined over the issue of capricious application of equal-employment-opportunity laws, on which each Federal department has been merrily making its own interpretations. Appearing before a subcommittee of the Senate Public Works committee, contractors and state officials were unanimous in approving the principle of equal employment, but also unanimous in denouncing administrative procedures. They cited case after case where a contractor's plans had been approved in one state, the same plan disapproved in another, because of lack of uniformity of regulation. The matter affects all construction where Federal funds are involved, and it seemed likely that Congress will insist on uniform rules.

The highway segment of the industry had won one major victory (despite the unexpected lack of support by AIA) over the outgoing Federal Highway Administration, over controversial proposed regulations setting up two-step hearings for highway route planning and design, and an appeals procedure

The appeals procedure was eliminated completely, the rest of the requirements modified, and, most significantly, the regulation was finally issued as a "PPM" (policy procedure memorandum), which can be changed easily by administrative order.

On a local level, architects were still awaiting (as of early February) a final Nixon Administration decision on who would head up the National Capital Planning Commission. It appeared that Philip G. Hammer, who has been serving as chairman under a Johnson appointment and whose term runs to 1973, would continue, and that Nixon would be content to make his own appointment when the term of Seattle architect Paul Thiry expires in April. Other members, who serve ex officio — such as the heads of the National Parks Service, Bureau of Public Roads and Public Buildings Service — will change as new appointments are made.

The commission acts as city planning arm for the District of Columbia and the Federal Government.

FINANCIAL

■ The startling jump to a reading of 132.6 (with 1957-59 as 100) in the highway cost index was a shocker to construction; it represented a rise of 11.3% over the fourth quarter of 1967, was blamed on higher costs of excavation. The rise was reinforced by a smaller but equally significant rise in the monthly cost index on water and sewer construction, which went up 1.44% in December, over November.

■ Housing starts seemed to be winding up 1968 at predicted rates. According to the Census Bureau, in October, rate of starts was at an adjusted rate of 1,548,000 for the year.

■ Total construction volume dropped slightly, in November figures now available, to a rate of \$86,700,000,000 compared with \$87 billion in October. Nevertheless, the total was about 9% over the previous year.

■ HUD's action in raising allowable maximum interest rates to 7½% was seen as a for housing; the higher rates (previous top was 6¾%) were expected to attract money back to the